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APPRECIATION OF MUSIC, LITERATURE AND ART AS A SOCIAL AIM

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One of the most fundamental factors in the furtherance of unity in our national life is the development of a popular taste for music, literature and art. Such a taste furthers this national unity both through the promotion of the common culture which is essential to a truly social democracy, and through the creation of a common pride in national aesthetic achievement that constitutes one of the finer phases of patriotism. In a socially unhomogeneous republic such as ours, each of these means to national unity 'must supplement the other. A common culture confined to appreciation of universal literature and art can promote a social intercourse between groups otherwise segregated by nationality, specialization and mode of life, without strengthening the emotional appeal of national aesthetic achievement. Aesthetic education confined to students in a particular type of institution or course of instruction made so technical as to repel or to reject all who are not naturally artistic, however strongly it may emotionalize national achievement, makes of the more broadly educated class an aristocracy in aesthetics as well as in learning. If our composite American people is to become a whole people, democratic, socially homogeneous, and politically homogeneous because socially homogeneous, each citizen must be made a lover not only of music, literature and art universal, but of American music, American literature and American art.

Our boys and girls should not be taught that there is no such thing as American literature or that there are no great American artists and composers. Even foreign-born Americans, whatever pride they feel in the aesthetic triumphs of the fatherland, should be proud of the contributions their compatriots have made to the aesthetic side of American life since they together came as immigrants to our shores. It is America that inspires the foreign-born genius; it is in America and for America that he labors, and it is the

recognition of Americans that is winning him renown. But after all, that art is most strongly American which, in addition to being "made in America," expresses our national spirit and emotionalizes our national features and characteristics. Where its appeal is powerful enough to add to the patriotism of childhood and youth in place of borrowing from it an interest which it otherwise lacks, it should form a conspicuous part of aesthetic training.

THE BAR TO AESTHETIC OPPORTUNITY

However, the most fundamental contribution of aesthetic training to citizenship and democracy is the common and intelligent love of the beautiful which makes possible the finer forms of social intercourse and is essential to the most manysided enjoyment of individual leisure. Curiously enough it is in a free system of public education rather than in prohibitive material and social conditions, that aesthetic enjoyment finds its real limit. The only obstacle which still stands in its way is a lack of that good taste and manysided interest which education alone can develop. The bar to an appreciation of the beautiful no longer lies in absence of opportunity that socially and economically limited environment denies.

On the one hand, individual leisure, both in the sense of shortened hours of employment and of multiplication of periods assigned to rest and recreation, is steadily increasing. On the other, every form of aesthetic enjoyment is being brought within the reach of all. Every type of book can be cheaply bought. Free libraries, local and circulating, make it possible to read the most expensive books for the price of a couple of street car tickets or postage stamps. The world's greatest pictures are reproduced in penny prints. Through a miracle which we do not as yet fully understand the whole world of nature and of art, so far as it is expressed in sound and in color, however distant in time or space, can be faithfully and dramatically reproduced through the phonograph and the moving pictures. Dress can be made as harmonious and becoming in chintzes and calicoes as in the wardrobe of a princess, while the laborer can afford to gratify his taste in the furnishing of his cottage more completely than the millionaire can express his artistic cravings through his architects and decorators. We are potentially a truer democracy in aesthetics than in economics or politics. We are aesthetically undemocratic only in our education.

TECHNIQUE UNDEMOCRATIC: APPRECIATION DEMOCRATIC

To be sure, a system of public education offers equal opportunity to every future citizen to become an artist. But opportunity in the material sense is conditioned by a peculiar sort of ability possessed by the chosen few. Until recently the boy who could not learn to write a poem or an essay or even to comprehend and remember the technique which makes literature an art was denied the story-telling, the dramatization, the unalloyed enjoyment of selected masterpieces impressively interpreted, that would make him a lover of literature in a variety of forms and through a multitude of interpreters. Until the coming of the phonograph, the teaching of music in the school has had for its aim singing by rote, without even the possibility of teaching the pupils to identify and enjoy the songs and themes of the great composers and to feel the thrill of symphony and opera. Even now, the great majority of pupils in the ordinary school are wasting their time in a hopeless effort at self-expression through brush and pencil possible only to the artistic few, when each one of them with a normal sense of form and color could be surely taught to love nature, to appreciate beautiful pictures, to select artistic ornaments and utensils and to wear appropriate and becoming dress. The late Dr. Harris, former United States Commissioner of Education, was wrong when he insisted that we would become artistic in our industrial products when the introduction of drawing into our public schools should develop workmen capable of artistic design. We now know that our workmanship and our merchandise will not become artistic until our people are well enough educated aesthetically to enjoy and to purchase the simple and the beautiful.

Whether in literature, painting or music, art is essentially aristocratic. Aesthetic training, on the contrary, being possible for all, results in a common love of the beautiful which must be added to common opportunity for its enjoyment before America can become aesthetically democratic. Those tendencies and practices in the teaching of music, literature and art that emphasize the development of aesthetic appreciation, therefore, will be most helpful in pointing the way to the adjustment of the material and method of instruction to the aesthetic demands of social life in a republic.

Curiously enough, it is the irresistible movement toward specific preparation for life, bitterly resented by lovers of culture, that is most largely responsible for this changing emphasis. To them the social aim means vocation. Confusing aesthetics with general training in the sense of discipline and generally useful habits, they have failed to see that every step toward more intensive academic study is a step away from literature, music and art, while the social aim, on the contrary, makes definite preparation for leisure an end in itself, rather than a by-product of formal study. A glimpse at some of the definite ways in which appreciation is being taught in representative schools will serve not only to show how far the social movement is furthering democracy in culture, but to illustrate concretely some of the local conditions and distinctions already discussed.

THE OVER ANALYSIS OF THE LITERARY MASTERPIECE

In the field of literature, so long as the four years of high school English were largely confined to the technical analysis of a few masterpieces as wholes, appreciation suffered not only through failure to develop interest in a variety of writers and forms of literature adequate to individual tastes and moods, but often through the creation of a distaste for exhaustive literary study, for the masterpieces exhaustively studied, and for the general literature of which they served as types. Any mode of study that turns attention from the masterpiece or passage as an emotional whole to the meaning of petty details and even to the technical means through which the emotion is produced, lessens appreciation and enjoyment. If appreciation is to become universal and many-sided, the study of artistic technique, whether in literature, music or art, must be confined to special schools or elective courses, except in those phases that can be so readily developed and become so much a matter of course, as not only to avoid interference with emotional appeal, but to be a part of it and to make it intelligent.

Dramatization, for example, especially in the earlier school grades where pupils with minimum of preparation and costume or as a spontaneous exercise take the parts of various characters in their story-books, is being made in hundreds of schools a means to appreciation of what is most fundamental in dramatic art.

Not only is this technical analysis being lessened or abandoned

in high school and grammar school, but throughout the entire school course. In its place, a number of factors almost wholly aesthetic, or at least non-technical, are uniting to create a many-sided love of literature. Story-telling by primary school teachers and through phonograph records; the impressive reading by teacher or expert of books and poems, which will not be followed by composition writing or quiz; dramatization, where pupils with minimum preparation and costuming, take the parts of various characters in their story-books; school plays, which through double or triple castes, ensure general participation in dramatic activities; the reading of several primary school readers each year in place of one; the encouragement of individual reading through school libraries and the posting or circulation of lists of books suitable for children of various ages; the circulation by the school of such lists among parents and the committees that purchase books for Sunday school libraries; the requirement that pupils shall read a limited number of books from a list embracing a great variety; the reaction in the grammar school grades from the critical reading of two or three masterpieces to the reading of miscellaneous selections from all forms of literature as was the case with the older school readers; the modification of college entrance requirements in English to permit the substitution of evidence of wide reading or broad literary interests for mastery of technique; all these practices are combining to create a popular taste for what is beautiful in verse and in prose.

CULTIVATION OF THE LOVE OF MUSIC

In music, as in literature, democratic culture demands a love of music in a variety of forms—especially in the forms which require a cultivated ear. Everybody loves some form of music or other, but confined to a brass band, ragtime melodies, fox trots and one-steps, or even the ordinary sort of hymns and Sunday school songs, music cannot be regarded as cultural. Still the beginnings of musical culture lie outside the school. The noblest music has been adapted to sacred song and remains as a spiritual possession of the people in common with the meaner melodies that are more vulgar in religion than in art. Themes from the masterpieces and songs that are themselves masterpieces are sung in the home, played in the theater, or whistled by the street Arab. But

in spite of this universal singing and playing, we lack as a people the sense of discrimination which finds greater pleasure in the artistic than the mediocre. It is not that a love of ragtime and of oratorio can not co-exist. Each is a form of self-expression adapted to changing mood. But culture demands not only a response to the sensuous in rhythm and harmony, but an intelligent and sympathetic comprehension of the music which through the genius of the master expresses the finer imaginings, emotions and aspirations of the human soul, or miraculously interprets and emotionalizes human experience. This involves something more than ability to sing or to perform on piano or violin and something less than training in musical technique.

Probably Dr. Flexner is right in his suggestion that "all children should at least endeavor to learn some form of instrumental music" even though he used it as a hypothetical illustration of possible forms of educational compulsion. All children should also be "made to sing." The mediocrity of skill that usually results is in itself a form of individual enjoyment and self-expression that does not necessarily interfere with appreciation. Since part singing, school orchestra, and even inartistic vocal and instrumental solos make the enjoyment of music more active and social, they should form a part of public education. Now that the phonograph is making us more than ever dependent upon music in which we have no part, it is especially significant that almost 50 per cent of the two hundred thousand pupils in four hundred American high schools are given training in chorus singing, 50 per cent of the schools give some credit toward graduation for chorus work, and two hundred and thirty-eight high schools have orchestras, though but a third of them allow any credit for orchestral service. The early giving of school credit for properly supervised private instruction in music by such school systems as those of Berkeley, California, and Chelsea, Massachusetts, and more recently by those of Pittsburgh and Hartford, may constitute the first step toward the teaching of instrumental music in the public school.

While not necessary to an appreciation of good music, school singing intensifies it for the patriotic songs, folk songs and lyrics that are rapidly taking the place of exercise and rote. On the other hand, it is hostile to appreciation only when it is confined to elementary technique. Mr. Foresman's utilization of the phono-

graph in the teaching of vocal music by giving for the pupil's imitation, marvelously trained voices and perfectly played instruments in place of the halting notes of an unskilled teacher, and his linking of the scale with masterpieces of beauty, have transformed the rote lesson itself into a means to appreciation.

The chief sin of the school, however, in the teaching of music has been the omission of work directly planned to develop appreciation. In the special report on "Music in the Public Schools," made by Mr. Earhart of Pittsburgh at the request of United States Commissioner Claxton, only twenty-four among six hundred and thirty-one high schools had courses in musical appreciation and but forty-nine in the history of music.

Unlike the influence of uniform college entrance requirements in English, appreciation has not been sacrificed to a technique required of all. Music has been taught only in its more elementary phases and almost solely in the elementary school. Even in the college, the champions of its traditional culture have strangely enough been satisfied to leave symphony, grand opera and oratorio to individual taste and opportunity. Its formal courses have been almost wholly confined to advanced technical training open only to the specialist, while its glee clubs and orchestras are hardly open to the charge of elevating musical taste.

THE USE OF THE PHONOGRAPH

The introduction of the phonograph into the school and the multiplication of records which sympathetically reproduce most of the great masterpieces remove the real bar to the development of appreciation for what is finest in music in every period of education. The teacher who might read a passage from literature impressively is helpless to present a variety of musical selections. Coöperation from local musical artists, such as that given by the Combes Conservatory of Music to the Observation School of the University of Pennsylvania during the summer of 1908, is rarely practicable. Courses in musical appreciation based on the use of phonograph records are practicable for every kind of school, from the little red schoolhouse to the college class. Hundreds of victrolas or other forms of phonographs and thousands of records have already been introduced into American schools. Dayton, Ohio, has long had a victrola in every school, Los Angeles has eighty and

Trenton sixteen. The danger is that they will become little more than a source of amusement, with musical appreciation as incidental an aim as in the home itself. Fortunately the phonograph companies are themselves meeting this need with specially*designed machines, records and courses, though educational experts must give the same serious study to this new movement as to other factors in the course of study. In the report made to the University of Wisconsin and the Department of Education by the State Music Committee, a course in music appreciation is included among those recommended to high schools having competent instructors in music. It is based upon Miss Faulkner's course planned for the Victor Talking Machine Company but advises the use of local artists and advanced music students to supplement mechanical musical instruments.

The work of this course is to study the form and structure of different kinds of music, to learn the leading composers and become familiar with many of the famous compositions, to study styles of various artists by means of the talking machine and to get an idea of good interpretation. Credit, one-fifth, each semester. This course is open to everyone who takes credit for private study.

Work such as this should begin in the first grade of the elementary school and continue through the last stage of instruction.

The college should do as much for music as it does for literature. An advanced general course in the history of music should be required to make or to keep students familiar with the school, nationality, period and individual characteristics of composers, supplemented by electives, required in various kinds of musical composition, as in various fields of literature.

And basal for this common culture and a part of it in every period of development should be a love of patriotic song and pride in American singers, instrumentalists and composers and their contributions to universal art.

APPRECIATION OF FORM AND COLOR

After all, it is perhaps in art in the field of form and color that the tendency toward aesthetic appreciation is most marked. Mr. Farnum in his recent report to United States Commissioner Claxton sharply contrasts the mechanical conceptions of drawing as a school subject held at the time of the Centennial Exposition of forty years ago with those of today. To be sure, art appreciation is set down

as but one among several fundamental aims and is generally subordinated to the "carefully guided practice" which is the "surest if not the only road" to visual discrimination without which "true appreciation of a work of art" is impossible. But "nearly every supervisor gives opportunity for practice study in the drawing course" and in the various means used to illustrate existing tendencies, art appreciation is given prominent place. It is not without significance that notwithstanding insistence upon actual work in drawing as the "surest road," the detailed work in appreciation given in certain of the illustrative courses is quite independent of "practice." In the high school department of the Ethical Culture School in New York City pupils who are not studying drawing are allowed to take the course in appreciation.

From the standpoint of aiding observation, correlation with manual training and some little contribution to appreciation that cannot otherwise be gained, a limited amount of work in drawing may be useful to all individuals. On the other hand, there are many other ways of teaching observation than through drawing, and all school studies that are not as highly specialized as advanced work in drawing itself should be, can be effectively taught without it. Here, as elsewhere, the expert in education must analyze and determine relative aims and values. Owing to the fact that the planning and supervision of art courses has been given over exclusively to specialists, there is the same added need for an open-minded study of values as in the case of the high school subjects.

But art appreciation is an aim that is largely independent of the development of skill and so far as the majority of the pupils are concerned, should, like literary and musical appreciation, be required throughout the school course with special emphasis of all that makes for the development of pride in American art. Strangely enough, the only course of study in which I happened to find an injunction for this special emphasis was in that of Salt Lake City. It is not a new sort of work that is needed but a more universal requirement of what is already done in many schools. Excellent reproductions of the great masterpieces can be obtained in penny prints. The study of pictures and sculpture with the aid of such books as John C. Van Dyke's *How to Judge of a Picture*, Miss Emery's *How to Enjoy Pictures*, Coffin's *A Child's Guide to Pictures*, must, therefore, not be sacrificed in the vain effort to teach all

children how to draw. The following "leading questions," for example, are used in Salt Lake City to increase appreciation of pictures and make it more intelligent.

The thought the artist aimed to present—the soul of the picture; the artist's ideal; wherein does the beauty of the picture consist; how far is the scene real, how far is it idealized; setting of the picture, city or country, indoors or outdoors; center of interest or main point, composition; source of light—what is told of natural phenomena, storm, wind, sunshine, temperature, etc. What have you to bring to the picture from your own knowledge of what others have said or written or painted or sung? Title, interpretation. Technique; how was the original picture made; by what process is the reproduction made? Is there a something about the picture that cannot be expressed in words? Is that the quality that made it necessary to express it as the artist did? etc.

THE TECHNICAL ANALYSIS OF PICTURES

Unlike a masterpiece of literature, which loses its emotional appeal as a whole, if in its first impression attention is called to details of technique, a picture continues to be seen as a whole even when attention is directed to its parts and its characteristics. The picture is still there, each new beauty increasing the impression made by the whole. The story or poem is lost as a whole as soon as analysis begins. Hence while technical characteristics of a literary or musical masterpiece must be matter of course and therefore habitual before they can add to its emotional appeal, the technique of a painting may be studied in detail, during its initial presentation, without distracting attention from the impression as a whole. If so, the only objection to such questions as the following taken from the Denver course lies in their complexity:

What locality is represented; point of view; extent of realism, idealism. How expressed? By real or imaginary subjects, bearing in mind such principles as the following: simplicity; breadth; repose; unity; harmony; proportion; equilibrium; lines; relative tone values; variety; how secured; repetition; perspective, gradation, subordination, concentration, definiteness, contrast, color—dominant, analogous or complimentary harmony, warmth, coldness.

One thing is sure. Much that Mr. Farnum includes under the general head of "Application and Correlation" is an end in itself that should be realized and can be realized, whether drawing is taught or not.

Home decoration, the selection of furniture, rugs, pictures and ornaments, tasteful in themselves, appropriate to the kind of room and in harmony with each other, is taught in some schools through

model homes and color schemes, in others through the actual fitting up of rooms. The fact that a schoolhouse has beautiful and appropriate pictures upon its walls, or beautiful grounds and school gardens which the pupils help to maintain does not necessarily affect home life. In addition to such admirable lists of plants appropriate for the school grounds and pictures suitable for school-rooms as have been made by the Public School Art League of Worcester, Massachusetts, there should be lists of plants appropriate for particular parts of home gardens, and pictures suitable for different sorts and sizes of rooms, particular colors of wall paper and special nooks and niches. The planting of trees on the home grounds of pupils, selected by vote of the school and approved by parents, has been successfully tried by a teacher in Baltimore County, Maryland, in place of the ordinary arbor day exercises. When parents can be led to coöperate with the school authorities, such arbor days may lead the way to the making of rough drafts showing the harmonious arrangements of flowers, shrubbery and trees for individual front yards or lawns. By and by art teachers may visit homes to praise any artistic things they can discover and tactfully prepare the way for suggestions as to possible purchases and locations for the rooms of their pupils or for contributions made by the pupils to the home. Chicago school children are loaned picture frames appropriate to particular pictures, in much the same way that they are loaned good books. There is a sharp contrast between art work such as this and the actual *making* of all sorts of art objects, most of which become things of horror when given prominent and inappropriate space by admiring or self-sacrificing parents.

EFFECT OF INDUSTRIAL ART WORK

Indeed, the distinctly vocational or industrial trend, which applied art or drawing is taking in many high schools, is distinct from the development of appreciation, if not hostile to it. A few pupils are being taught to make jewelry, pottery and plaster casts, to bind books, to make dresses, hats, collars and bags, in place of all pupils being trained to *select* them. Where part of this work takes the form of domestic art and girls are taught to do their own hat-making and dressmaking, appropriateness and becomingness can be directly and effectively taught, but even here selection should not be ignored. More girls will buy their personal apparel

than will make it. This fact has been strikingly illustrated lately in York, Pennsylvania, where girls in continuation school classes showed little interest when given the opportunity to study dress-making and hat-trimming. In general the factory girl or the shop girl wishes her leisure time for recreation in which she wears the hats and the clothing she has earned the money to buy.

Even from the standpoint of self-expression, which has become the chief aim of drawing and painting, selection is far more fundamental than skill. A glaring wall paper, a miscellany of bric-a-brac, lamps or vases embossed and painted into caricatures of the beautiful, hats that are fashionable but unbecoming, ostentatious and flashy jewelry, conspicuous shoes, clothing that cries aloud to attract the passerby—all that is intimately personal, is so obviously expressive of the aesthetic self that whether or not one has personally made it is immaterial, unless lack of skill in making it is accepted as a partial apology for wearing it.

CONCLUSION

In short, whether in literature, music or art, the mass of individuals will always be consumers rather than producers. The creation of the beautiful and skill in its manifestation belong to the realm of specialization. Art is social only as it contributes to the happiness of society rather than of an esoteric cult, and democratic only where opportunity to acquire it is open to all who have more than common ability. It is only when aesthetic education seeks appreciation rather than skill and manifests itself in tasteful selection rather than artistic production that the fine arts can become part of a culture that is social and democratic because it is not only open to all, but possible for all and required of all. Examples of schools which emphasize various forms of appreciation have been more or less haphazardly chosen. Only a complete aesthetic survey of American schools can show the extent to which each community is contributing to these ends and give just credit for leadership and conspicuous achievement. Only scientific investigation can determine what materials and methods are most effective. But even a superficial glimpse at existing conditions and tendencies shows that education is so adjusting itself to its new aesthetic responsibilities that a democracy of culture made possible by cheap literature, the phonograph and the moving picture may soon come to play its part in the evolution of a truly democratic republic.